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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §102

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 6, 52 and 53 under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Petrunka et al. (United States Patent No. 5,991,369).

Regarding claim 1, applicant respectfully disagrees that Petrunka et al. teach or suggest a call setup message having a format reserved for a redirected call setup message issued by a service switching point (SSP) in response to an uncompleted call to a service subscriber, and issuing the call setup message into a common channel signalling (CCS) network to initiate the establishment of the call connection directly to the voice mail box of the service subscriber.

Petrunka et al. disclose a system and method for message delivery of non-published directory numbers to voice mail boxes. A directory assistance operator receives a call from a caller and determines which number is required by the caller (for instance, based on a name). The operator consults the Directory Assistance (DA) database and ascertains whether the party associated with the required number has a published or a non-published telephone number. If the telephone number is published, the caller is provided with the number. If the number is a non-published number, the caller is provided with a choice to leave a message in a voice mail box associated with the non-published number (provided the non-published number subscriber has subscribed to such a service). If the caller wishes to leave a voice mail message for the non-published number subscriber, DA database transmits the non-published subscriber's number, the **direct voicemail box system number** associated with the non-published subscriber, and caller's number through an Operator Services Switch to a services computer (i.e. the caller's voice link is switched to the services computer – Col. 4, lines 8-22). As best seen in Figure 5, the DA database 34 is enhanced to include, among other enhanced information, the **direct number 55** to the voice mail system used to store messages for the non-published number subscriber. Services computer, using the **direct voice mail box system number** provided to it, then establishes a link through the PSTN to the voice mail system. The service computer then authenticates the call and switches the caller to the voicemail system to leave a voicemail message. Another embodiment is described in column

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4, line 55 onwards, wherein the system is implemented by storing the voice mail system number in a services computer or in another database such as AIN Service Control Point.

In rejecting claim 1, the Office Action references Fig. 4 of Petrunka et al. As shown in Fig. 4, if a caller trying to access an unpublished telephone number indicates that he would like to leave a [voice mail] message, ARU 35 communicates this information to DA database 34 (step 432). DA database 34 then transmits the listed party's non-published number, the **direct voice mail box system number**, and caller 30's phone number through Operator Services Switch 32 to services computer 36 (step 434). DA database 34 also instructs Operator Services Switch 32 to terminate its links with DA database 34 and ARU 35 (step 436). (Col. 4, lines 8-16.) Petrunka et al. further teach that services computer 36, using the **direct voice mail box system number** provided to it, then establishes a link through the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) to voice mail system 39 (step 440). (Col. 4, lines 23-26.) And, service computer 36 then gains access to the voice mail system 39 by providing system 39 with any necessary access information, such as a password (step 442). This access information remains the same for every call services computer 36 places to the voice mail system 39, and, for that reason, is stored in services computer 36 during initial setup and configuration (col. 4, lines 31-37).

Consequently, as would be understood by any person skilled in the art, Petrunka et al. use an administrative path (password required) to access the voice mail box of the unlisted number subscriber. Petrunka et al. therefore teach away from the invention claimed in claim 1.

The rejection of claim 1 is thereby traversed.

With respect to claim 6, that claim includes the same limitation and the arguments set forth above apply. The rejection of claim 6 is thereby likewise traversed.

With respect to claim 52, claim 52 is amended to include the limitation of formulating a call setup message for initiating the establishment of a call connection between the requesting party and the voice mail box in response to the request for a direct connection to the voice mail box, the call setup message having a format reserved for redirected call setup messages issued by a service switching point in response to an uncompleted call to a service subscriber. For reasons set forth above with reference to claim 1, the rejection of claim 52 is traversed.

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Claim 53 is amended to be consistent with the amendment made to claim 52 and the rejection of claim 53 is likewise traversed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

The Office Action rejects claims 54-59 and 63-65 under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. in view of Tov et al. (United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0152402).

Claim 54 and claims 56-59 are amended to be consistent with amended claim 52.

Claim 55 is cancelled and the subject matter thereof incorporated into claim 52.

For reasons set forth above, amended claim 52 clearly distinguishes over the teachings of Petrunka et al. Since Petrunka et al. teach away from the invention claimed in claim 52, the combination of Petrunka et al. and Tov et al. cannot render claims dependent therefrom obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. The rejection of claims 54 and 56-59 is thereby traversed.

With respect to claims 63-65, those claims are cancelled and the rejection is traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. in view of Holt (United States Patent No. 6,711,243). For reasons set forth above in detail with reference to claim 1, Petrunka et al. teach away from the invention claimed in claim 1. The combination of Petrunka et al. and Holt cannot render claims dependent therefrom obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. The rejection of claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 is thereby likewise traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 4 and 9 as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. combined with Holt in view of Brunson (United States Patent No. 4,996,704). Claims 4 and 9 respectively depend from claim 1 and for reasons set forth above with respect to claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 the rejection of claims 4 and 9 is traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 5 and 10 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. in view of Holt and further in view of Russell. The arguments set forth above with respect to claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 apply and the rejection of claims 5 and 10 is likewise traversed.

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The Office Action rejected claims 60-62 as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. in view of Tov and Holt. Claims 60-62 depend from amended claim 52 which clearly distinguishes over the teachings of Petrunka et al. For reasons set forth above with reference to claims 54 and 56-59, the rejection of claims 60-62 is likewise traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 12 and 13 as being unpatentable over Petrunka et al. combined with Holt in view of Tov. The same arguments set forth above with reference to claims 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 14 and 15 apply and the rejection of claims 12 and 13 is traversed.

New claims 66-79 are added to this application. New claim 66 claims a method of providing direct access to a voice mail box of a service subscriber without first attempting to complete a call to the service subscriber. The method comprises receiving a request for a direct connection to the voice mail box of a service subscriber from a requesting party via a data network, receiving a calling number for the requesting party via the data network, triggering the establishment of a call connection between the calling number for the requesting party and the voice mail box in response to the request for a direct connection to the voice mail box.

New claim 66 is fully supported by the description as filed (see paragraph 0043). No new matter has been added.

Nothing in Petrunka et al. or Tov et al. taken separately or in combination teaches the invention claimed in new claim 66. In particular, both taken alone or in combination fail to teach or suggest the step of receiving a calling number for the requesting party via the data network. Applicant therefore respectfully submits that such a method is neither taught nor suggested in any prior art known to the applicant.

Dependent claims 67-79 further claim the invention claimed in new claim 66. No new matter has been added, and claims 67-79 are fully supported in the description as filed. With respect to claim 67, see paragraph 0043. With respect to claim 68, see paragraph 0043. With respect to claim 69, see paragraphs 0043 and 0044. With respect to claim 70, see paragraph 0047. With respect to claim 71, see paragraph 0043. With respect to claim 72, see paragraph 0048. With respect to claims 73-79, those claims claim limitations similar to those present in claims 1-15 already on file in this application.

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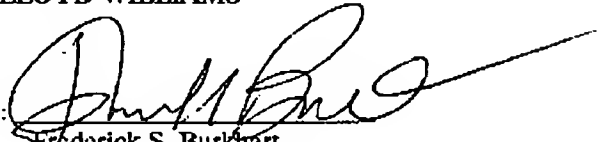
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It is therefore respectfully submitted that this application is now in a condition for immediate allowance. Favourable reconsideration and early issuance of the Notice of Allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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